

James Knox Polk to Andrew Jackson, December 4, 1826, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

JAMES K. POLK TO JACKSON.

Washington, December 4, 1826.

. . . . On my way through Virginia, to this place, I learned from a source in which I place confidence, that it was contemplated by some of the leading men of that State, about Richmond, to address you soon, for the purpose of ascertaining your opinions at large, in relation to the construction which you place on the federal consti[tu]tion, and more especially in relation to the power of making internal improvements, through the territory of the States, by the General Government. Your opinions on this subject I have no doubt have long since been settled, and when called on in a proper way I have as little doubt will be given independently, and regardless of consequences. Virginia you know is exceedingly sensative on this subject, and the only object I at present have, in writing you is, that you may not be taken unapprised; and be called upon for a hasty opinion. Without great care in the phraseology employed to convey our ideas, you know the plainest sentiment in the English language may be perverted, and by the uncandid made to mean any thing but what it was intended to mean. It may be that the call may never be made; but whethere it should or not, I hope not to be deemed obtrusive in making the suggestion. It can do no harm. The information though not given to me in confidence, I presume was not intended to be made public; I feel however unrestrained in communicating it to you, and for your greater satisfaction, will state it to you confidentially as I recd. it.

At Abingdon in conversation with *Dr. McCall* , he stated to me that such a call would certainly be made on you; that he had learned it from *Col. Campbell* a very intelligent

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gentleman of that vicinity and one who was well acquainted with the views of the leading politicians of the State; and particularly of those in Richmond and its vicinity. Whether the call will proceed from the *friends* of the administration, or from the *lukewarm*, I am unable to say. That it will not proceed from your friends I am satisfied—1st. because they have had ample opportunities in the whole tenor of your public life of understanding and knowing your opinions, upon this as well as all other great National questions, on which it has become necessary for you to either speak or act; and 2nd. because in Virginia, your friends have now no occasion to make such a call, for Virginia, from information recd. from all qua[r]ters is now as determined in her opposition to the present administration, as Tennessee, Pennsylvania or any other State in the Union. Whatever therefore may be the design of some in Va. who have suggested this plan, with a view as I believe to injure you in that state, the effort must be wholly abortive. I must close this communication already swelled to a much greater length than I anticipated when I commenced it. It is written with the best design, and if the suggestion contained in it should possibly be of any service I shall be amply rewarded. In the progress of the session if any thing of interest should occur, which does not appear in the Newspapers I will take great pleasure in communicating it, and shall be happy at any time you can find leisure to hear from you.

I have the Honor to be

NB. Our foreign friends here rejoice with us at the success of our friend Majr. Eaton. We consider it a great point gained.